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C O N F I D E N T I A L

STAFF

FBIS 21452

TO: FBIS/LONDON INFO FBIS/GULF. Y

RYBAT Y

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF GULF BUREAU Y

[redacted] 25X1

1. GRAMM-RUDMAN AND OTHER BUDGET CONSTRAINTS HAVE RESULTED IN AN FBIS RECOMMENDATION THAT GULF BUREAU BE CLOSED AT THE END OF THE CURRENT FY. NOT ONLY IS GULF A VERY EXPENSIVE BUREAU TO OPERATE, BUT MOST OF ITS COVERAGE CAN BE ASSUMED BY OTHER BUREAUS OR THE BBC. A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE CLOSURE RECOMMENDATION IS THE POOR PHYSICAL SECURITY AT THE BUREAU SITE. WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT WE MUST RELOCATE THE BUREAU, BUT CANNOT MOVE INTO THE NEW EMBASSY COMPOUND. ANY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION WOULD HAVE COST UPWARDS OF [redacted] WHICH IS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE UNDER CURRENT BUDGET CONDITIONS. Y 25X1

2. WE INTEND TO PROCEED WITH PAPERWORK REQUIRED TO GET APPROVAL FOR THE CLOSURE. MEANWHILE, WE ARE WRESTLING WITH THE PROBLEM OF DISTRIBUTING COVERAGE AND SOME OF THE PERSONNEL NOW AT GULF. WE INTEND TO RETAIN ALL POSSIBLE COVERAGE AT FBIS BUREAUS,

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MINIMIZING THE IMPACT ON BBC, BUT CANNOT ABSORB ALL COVERAGE AT FBIS BUREAUS, ESPECIALLY UNTIL NICOSIA HAS CAPABILITY TO MONITOR ARABSAT. Y

3. THE INITIAL IMPACT ON LONDON AND THE BBC IS BRIEFLY AS FOLLOWS. MOD WILL GET MORE INFO OUT TO YOU SHORTLY.

A. IRAN -- GF HAS PRIMARY COVERAGE FOR THE 0530-0535 GMT AND 0630-0635 GMT TEHRAN DOMESTIC CASTS AND TAKES THE 0430-0500 GMT CAST LIVE WHILE BBC RECORDS FOR LATER PROCESSING. BBC WILL HAVE TO COVER LIVE. BBC WILL ALSO LOSE GULF'S BACKSTOPPING ABILITIES, THOUGH WE WILL TRY TO REPLACE THESE FROM NC OR TA. TEHRAN INTERNATIONAL CASTS IN RUSSIAN AT 1515-1615 GMT AND IN PASHTO (IRREG) WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO BE COVERED BY PHONE FEED FROM ISLAMABAD. Y

B. USSR -- DEPENDING ON NICOSIA'S STAFFING, THE MOSCOW WEEKEND PERSIAN CASTS AT 1500-1530 AND 1700-1800 GMT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY BBC VIA PHONE PATCH FROM ISLAMABAD. AGAIN, THE DAILY 15 MINUTES OF TURKMEN, 95 MINUTES OF RUSSIAN, AND 60 MINUTES OF ARMENIAN DONE AT GULF WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE HANDLED IN LONDON

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THOUGH WE ARE LOOKING INTO OTHER POSSIBILITIES. Y

C. SUDAN/YEMEN -- EAU WILL HAVE TO PICK UP THE 0430-0500 GMT OMDURMAN DS CAST UNTIL NC GETS IT VIA SATELLITE. EAU'S ASSISTANCE WILL BE NEEDED TO HELP JN COVER ADEN AND SANAA. WE INTEND TO IMPROVE OUR ANTENNAS AT JORDAN FOR THESE, AND OTHER, SOURCES. Y

D. SAUDI ARABIA -- BBC WILL HAVE TO PICK UP 13 HOURS A DAY OF SPA. WE PLAN ON NC TAKING THIS COVERAGE ONCE ITS DISH IS OPERATIONAL. BBC COVERED THIS IN THE PAST VIA LANDLINE. Y

4. TO SUM UP, NO CLASS A COVERAGE WILL BE LOST, THOUGH COVERAGE OF IRAN, THE YEMENS, AND SOVIET REGIONALS WILL BE LESS RELIABLE. PRESS COVERAGE WILL BE EXAMINED IN DETAIL LATER, BUT SOME MAY FALL TO PMU. FBIS SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESUME MOST OF THE ARABIC COVERAGE WITH COVERAGE OF ARABSAT ABOUT SIX MONTHS AFTER GULF CLOSURE. COST SAVINGS TO FBIS FROM THE CLOSURE, EVEN WITHOUT CONSIDERING [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1 IN THESE DAYS OF GRAMM-RUDMAN, WE FEEL THE BALANCE WEIGHS HEAVILY IN FAVOR OF CLOSURE. Y

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5. WE NOW NEED YOU TO APPROACH BBC MANAGEMENT WITH THE ISSUES AND DETERMINE THEIR REACTION TO THE ABOVE. WE WILL NOT PROCEED WITH OBTAINING FORMAL PERMISSION TO CLOSE GULF UNTIL WE HAVE REACHED BASIC AGREEMENT ON REVISED COVERAGE RESPONSIBILITIES. THE CLOSURE WILL OBVIOUSLY BE ONE OF THE MAJOR TOPICS FOR THE COORDINATION MEETING, BUT WE NEED A BBC RESPONSE TO THE MAJOR POINTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. DECL OADR DRV COL-14 [redacted] H

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